THE DIVINE RIGHT OF *Church-Government* BY BISHOPS,

Its Universal Reception, even in the FIRST AGES of the Church, Asserted and Proved.

D. BLONDEL'S and OTHERS Arguments against it considered.

The CHALLENGE Renewed, To shew any Church, till lately, that hath not been Governed by Episcopal Government.

And a PERSWASIVE to DISSENTERS to return to the Communion of the Church of ENGLAND.

Being a *Preliminary Discourse* to an History of the Government of the Church, for the Three First Centuries and the beginning of the Fourth.

By FRANCIS BROKESBY, B. D. sometime Fellow of *Trinity-College* in *Cambridge*.

LONDON,

Printed for *James Holland* and *Henry Clements*, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, *W. Taylor* in *Pater-noster Row*, and *R. Bonwicke* in *Fleet-street*: and Sold by *John* [illegible] near *Stationers-Hall*, MDCCXIV.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA

TO THE
READER.

SEing that there are many who ſtand in need of having their Notions of Church-Government rectified, and their Prejudices againſt that of Biſhops removed; who have not Leiſure to Read my Hiſtory of the Government of the Primitive Church, wherein I have ſhewn that the Church was in the Firſt Ages (and indeed ever ſince, till the Change made at Geneva) Governed by Biſhops; I thought it requiſite, for their ſakes, to publiſh by it ſelf this Diſcourſe, with ſome Alterations and Additions; which they may in a ſhort time Peruſe, and eaſily procure: By which they'll find it Apoſtolical, and thence Divine Inſtitution aſſerted, the Objections againſt it anſwered, the Challenge renewed to ſhew any Church (till of late) any otherwiſe governed than by

by Bishops; together with a serious Perswasive to them, who Separate from the Church of England, to consider this and to return into the Bosom of the Church, as they value their Present Peace, and Future Happiness, the Peace and Welfare of the Church, and the Honour of Almighty God. Which, as it is the End of my Publishing this, so, when effected, by my own or other's Labours, will be Matter of the greatest Joy to me, as the Conversion of Sinners is to the Angels in Heaven.

THE

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF *Church-Government*, BY BISHOPS.

WHEN the Happiness of the Church, and in order thereto, the keeping of *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, are things of the greatest moment; being such, in which the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls are so nearly concern'd; others will join with me in judging, that whatever conduces to secure and establish that Peace, and helps to disappoint the Designs of its Enemies, who restlesly endeavour to break and ruin it, must be singularly beneficial, and thence acceptable to all truly pious Christians. Especially if we consider, that the Enemies of Christianity it self, Atheists, Deists, and the like profligate Wretches, make it their Business to widen our Breaches, and hinder the healing and closing our Ruptures; that they may dash us in pieces, or at least prevent the uniting of all serious Christians in opposing their impious Machinations. These Men are sensible that the

the Church of *England* is eſtabliſh'd on a firm *baſis*, both in reſpect to the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Faith, and to its Government by Biſhops, a Government received from the Apoſtles, and continued in all Parts, and in all Ages of the Church, 'till the Change made at *Geneva*. This Church therefore they endeavour to overthrow, that they may be looſe from its ſacred Doctrines and holy Precepts, which give a Check to their licentious Practices, as well as that they may, if they can, accompliſh their ſacrilegious Projects, ſhare in the Spoil. To effect which, they know no Methods more likely to be ſucceſsful, than by prejudicing Perſons againſt the Conſtitutions and Government of our Church, withdrawing them from its Communion, eſtabliſhing a Faction in oppoſition to it; and in order to maintain that Faction, deſtroying that Church from which they have ſeparated, at leaſt ruining its Apoſtolick Government. This might awaken ſuch Diſſenters who have any true Concern for Religion, and make them cautious, leſt whilſt they undermine the Church of *England*, which is the great Bulwark of Religion, they undermine Religion itſelf, and afford matter of Triumph to its irreligious, accurſed Enemies. Yet really thus do thoſe Men, tho' they may not deſign it, who not only withdraw their Subjection from their Biſhops, but alſo profeſſedly oppoſe Epiſcopacy it ſelf, notwithſtanding its univerſal Reception in the Church from the times of the Apoſtles. What theſe Men do, by their Sermons and private Suggeſtions, I dare not pretend to know; but the Books they have publiſhed, that they may depreſs that Government, and create a Prejudice in Mens Minds againſt it, are undeniable Arguments of their Aim to overthrow it.

And beſides this, there are many, who not only from the Reading of ſuch Books, and the Influence of the Diſcourſes of their Preachers, but alſo thro' Prejudices of Education, and Ignorance of Primi-

tive

tive Antiquity, look upon Government by Biſhops as one of thoſe Corruptions, which crept into the Church in latter Ages, together with Papal Uſurpations, and Popiſh Errors and Corruptions; and hence ſtand in need to have their Notions of Church-Government rectified: eſpecially thoſe, who from their Miſapprehenſions, ſeparate from the Church of *England*, the beſt conſtituted Church on Earth; and withdraw from Communion with their own Biſhop and the Presbyters, that miniſter under him; and not only ſo, but alſo become Enemies to the Government by Biſhops it ſelf, tho inſtituted by the Bleſſed Apoſtles themſelves, and therefore of Divine Right. Hence 'tis a work of Chriſtian Charity to undeceive theſe deluded, tho' well-meaning Perſons; conſidering that their Error has ſo great an Influence on their Practice, as to cauſe them to divide the Church, to violate its Unity, and to diſturb its Peace and Welfare; And not only this, but alſo to hinder their own inward Peace, whilſt built on a wrong Foundation, and to endanger their Eternal Happineſs.

For whilſt they entertain this Error, they ſecurely perſiſt in the Sin of Schiſm, and at the ſame time bereave themſelves of the Benefits of the Goſpel Covenants, which are conveyed by the Sacraments; in that none can authoritatively adminiſter theſe ſo as to have their Acts confirmed in Heaven, but ſuch as are commiſſioned by Chriſt, and receive Authority from him; and this none can ordinarily have, but by the Impoſition of the Hands of Biſhops, who ſucceed the Apoſtles, whom our Saviour inveſted with that Power. Now whatever Charity may incline us to hope in Caſes of Neceſſity, yet what Excuſe can be made in this Kingdom, where ſuch Neceſſity cannot be pretended? Eſpecially if we add, that here none can ſeparate from the Communion of their Biſhop, and thoſe Presbyters that are under him, without involving themſelves in the Sin

of

of Schism; a Sin which destroys Charity, the greatest Characteristick of Christ's Disciples, and dissolves that Bond by which Christ's Church is united as a Society; a Sin which the Holy Scriptures condemn, and the Fathers, that lived near the Apostles time, paint in black Colours; which, if seriously considered, would make them that are guilty thereof, and much more those that encourage them in that Guilt, to tremble.

There have been indeed many excellent Treatises written to awaken and convince these Men of their dangerous and mischeivous Error. But yet withal, I cannot but think, that when the Government of the Church by Bishops is, by a plain Narrative, shewn to be founded by Christ and his Apostles, and to be that Government by which the Church in the Age, immediately after the Apostles, was governed, and thus continued in all Ages following, and in all parts of the Church, 'till a new Model, on a secular reason, was erected not two hundred years ago at *Geneva*: This may conduce to remove the Prejudices against Bishops, which so many have entertained, to the great Disturbance of the Church, and the Hurt of their own Souls.

Now when their Prejudices arise from one of these false Notions: (1.) That *Bishop* and *Presbyter* is the same Office, and that meer Presbyters are invested with the Power of Ordination, and other Acts which Bishops challenge as appropriate to their Office, and that a Bishop was only Moderator or Chairman in Ecclesiastical Assemblies: Or, (2.) Admitting the Offices where distinct, that a Bishop is only the Pastor of a single Congregation, and that Diocesan Bishops, who are over many Parochial Churches, are Criminals. I shall endeavour to remove both these Prejudices, and shew how little ground there is for them, [illegible] in the History; and here briefly, in respect to the first of these.

In

In considering the first of these Opinions, I have chiefly had regard to what the learned *David Blondel* has said in his Apology for St. *Jerom*'s Opinion, where he has amassed a great Heap of Collections out of ancient and modern Writers. In which Work he has discovered his vast reading, and acquaintance with such Writers, and has, with a peculiar Nicety, settled the time wherein each of them wrote, with some not-unuseful Observations; but, together with this, has dictated with Confidence without proof, wrested and forced the Fathers to speak what they never intended, to serve his *Hypothesis*. This I have observed in the Treatise, in their proper places. However I shall here consider some general Positions of his, whereby he endeavours to advance the Cause of Presbytery.

But before I enter on that Discussion, I shall here consider one thing wherewith several Dissenters, and I hope some of them truly conscientious, are prejudiced against Bishops, and that is, that we find not in the History of the New Testament that the Apostles instituted Bishops, and settled them in peculiar Churches. In answer to this, I might desire them to shew me where the Apostles instituted the Observation of the *Lord's Day*, the Abolition of the Jewish Sabbath, and the Introduction of the Christian Sabbath, and where these things are mentioned in the History of the New Testament; and yet they observe this great Christian Festival, and that with the greatest reason, in that it has been constantly, and in all Ages of the Church, observed and celebrated; especially, when the reason of its Celebration may be inferred from sundry Passages in the Holy Scriptures. And the like may be said concerning the baptizing of Infants. The same we assert, and can prove of the Government of the Church by Bishops, that it has been used in all Ages, and in all Parts of the Church of which we have any Knowledge; and we have enough in the

Holy Scriptures to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of its general Reception and Continuance. We ſay concerning this, as alſo the Obſervation of the Lord's Day, and the Baptiſm of Infants, that theſe being Matters of Fact, and ſo eaſily apprehended by the meaneſt Capacities, and by their conſtant uſe as eaſily tranſmitted to Poſterity, there was not that Neceſſity of their being delivered in the Holy Scriptures, as there was for Matters of Faith. But then, (2.) There is yet a farther reaſon why the Inſtitution of Biſhops is not recorded in the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament, which cannot be ſaid of the Obſervation of the Lord's Day, and of Infant Baptiſm, and that is, becauſe Biſhops were not ſettled in particular Churches (the Church of *Jeruſalem* only excepted) 'till after the Hiſtory of the *Acts of the Apoſtles* ends, which was about the thirtieth Year after Chriſt's Aſcenſion; the Apoſtles all that time, and ſomewhat after, adminiſtring the Government in their own Perſons, or by Perſons inveſted with Apoſtolical Power, whoſe Commiſſion was not confined to particular Churches. And conſequently, if this Government was not then ſettled, what occaſion or place could there be for the mention of it in that ſacred Hiſtory? Beſides, the *Acts of the Apoſtles* comprize not the Labours of all, nor of the greateſt part of the Apoſtles, which they employed in propagating the Goſpel, and in planting of Churches. That Hiſtory tells us little of St. *John*, and of the two St. *James's*; and tho' much of St. *Peter* before, yet little after the ſecond and third Year after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, however nothing after his miraculous Deliverance out of Priſon, beſides his Preſence and Speech at the Council of *Jeruſalem*; and nothing of the reſt of the Twelve; in that St. *Luke* chiefly relates the Acts of St. *Paul*, (who', tho' not one of the Twelve, was not the leaſt of the Apoſtles) of which he was an Eye-Witneſs, and this to St. *Paul's* Arrival at *Rome*, where he was

was two Years detained a Priſoner. In all which time, wherein the Apoſtles governed the Churches, there could be no occaſion to ſpeak of the Inſtitution of Biſhops, there being none at that time ſet over particular Churches. As for the Epiſtles of the bleſſed Apoſtles, they were written on particular Occaſions, for the Uſe, and according to the Exigencies of the Churches, or Perſons to whom they were ſent.

The Government of the Church, as it was at that time, is therein ſuppoſed, and not by thoſe Epiſtles ſettled or inſtituted. Beſides, ſeveral of the Apoſtles lived ſome time after the Books of the New Teſtament were written, in which time they might receive Revelations about ſettling the Government of the Church. For we find God revealed his Will to 'em gradually, according as they were prepared to receive ſuch Revelations, and the Exigencies of the Church required the Manifeſtation of them; as we find it was in the Caſe of receiving Perſons, that were not circumciſed, into the Chriſtian *Pecu-liam*, (of which *Acts* x and xi.) which at that time was entertained with Difficulty, and probably before that time would have met with greater Oppoſition. No doubt God ſaw when was the proper Seaſon to guide the Apoſtles by his Holy Spirit, in this great Affair of ſettling the Government of his Church, which he did by ſeveral Steps and Gradations; as at firſt to do it by the Apoſtles themſelves, and by others inveſted with extenſive Apoſtolick Power, while the Church was in its Infancy; ſo afterwards, when it was much enlarged, and particular Churches modelled, and brought to greater Perfection by their perſonal Inſpection and Direction, than it was poſſible they could be reduced to at their firſt Plantation; then was a fit Seaſon for ſettling Biſhops to preſide and Govern Churches, which they themſelves could not much longer do, when their Departure was at Hand.

Neither doth this at all derogate from the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, which is asserted in the Articles of the Church. Doctrines and Matters of Faith may be mistaken, and hence 'tis more expedient that these should be committed to Writing, than such things as are obvious to all, and which may easily be understood by Persons of mean Capacity, and when the same is continued from one Age to another; especially if such, wherein the universal Church unanimously concurrs, and in which all Christians are concerned. In such a Case, there is less need to have the thing committed to Writing. Such is the Government of the Church, and such are the Officers by whom it is managed. But in this Case we say, that tho' we have no Account in the Scripture-History of the Institution of Bishops, or however of Officers superior to Presbyters, being set over particular Churches; neither could it well be, in that the Apostles themselves governed the Church 'till after the time wherein the *Acts of the Apostles* ended. Yet we have sufficient Evidence from the holy Scriptures that this was done, as presumptive from what our Saviour and the Apostles did in laying the Platform of the Church, so especially when we find Bishops placed in particular Churches, even in the times of some of the Apostles. For, (1.) We find our Blessed Saviour laying a Foundation for this disparity and Subordination of Church-Officers, in his choosing first the Twelve Apostles, and then afterwards the Seventy, inferior to the Apostles; by which he clearly manifested how he would have his Church, when arrived to a full Stature, governed by this Difference of Officers which he made in its first Formation: Of which see more *Chap.* i. of the History. (2.) This Method the Apostles afterwards pursued, when they, after they had gathered and planted Churches, ordained and appointed Presbyters to teach them whom they had discipled, to observe Christ's Commands, and perform

other

other Ministerial Offices, and yet reserve the Government of those Churches in their own Hands: Of this see *Chap.* iii, iv. (3.) And afterwards, when on God's extraordinary blessing of their incessant Labours, Churches were multiplied, they invested *Timothy* and *Titus* (and no doubt many others, besides them who are mentioned in the New Testament) with apostolical Power, and committed to them the governing of Churches, (which they themselves could not attend, in that they were employed in propagating the Gospel in distant Places.) Which Persons ordained Presbyters in the Churches to which they were sent, yet never impower'd these Presbyters to ordain others, or to govern the Churches in which they were placed; this Power residing still in these Apostolical Persons, and in the Apostles themselves who gave them their Commission. By which they made it clearly appear, that these higher Prerogatives in the Church belonged not to Presbyters, but to themselves and the Apostles, and so should afterwards be devolved upon the Bishops, who were yet to be the Successors of the Apostles. But yet farther: (4.) This Authority appears from the Holy Scripture, not only to be implied and designed for the Bishops as Successors of the Apostles, but to be actually committed to them, *viz.* To such as were the Governours of particular Churches, as well as to *Timothy* and *Titus*, *&c.* whose Provinces were probably of larger Extent. This is evident in the seven Churches of *Asia*, *Rev.* ii. and iii. which we find actually governed by Bishops, who are there called the *Angels* of the Churches, to whom it is manifest that the Administration of the Government in those Churches was solely committed, when they, and they only, are blamed for the Neglect of Discipline on Offenders, and they only are commended, where the Churches under their Care flourished and prospered, as being the Effect of their pastoral Inspection and Administration;

tion; in both which the Presbyters have no ſhare. Of which ſee *Chap.* vi. of the Hiſtory.

So that I may now ſafely affirm, and expect that impartial Readers ſhould be of my mind, that there is as clear and full an Account of the Eſtabliſhment of Biſhops in the Chriſtian Church, and this by the Apoſtles, and conſequently by God himſelf, who by his Holy Spirit guided and directed them, and this proved from the Holy Scripture itſelf, as can be expected in ſuch a Caſe: And this Proof as clear and full, if not clearer and fuller, than of the Obſervation of the Lord's Day, and of Infant-Baptiſm. Tho' the great Confirmation of our Faith, in the Belief of all theſe, and the Reaſonableneſs of our Continuance in the Obſervation and uſe of them, is their being univerſally received in all Parts, and all Ages of the Chriſtian Church; becauſe there could not have been ſuch an unanimous Conſent herein, had they not been appointed and ſettled by the firſt Founders and Planters of the Church, *viz.* the bleſſed Apoſtles. That there was ſettled every where a Government by Biſhops, as diſtinct from, and ſuperior to, Presbyters, within forty Years or leſs after the Death of the Apoſtles, is acknowledged by the moſt learned Champions of Presbytery, *Salmaſius*, † *Blondel* and *Daillee*, and if then, how they came to know that it was not earlier, and that a Change was then made of what they ſuppoſe was ſettled by the Apoſtles, tho' contrary to the Practice of the Apoſtles, who entruſted that Power in Presbyters, deſerves our Enquiry. Have they any ancient Writings of Perſons of that time or near it, that tell us this? St. *Jerom*'s Aſſertion, who lived near three hundred Years after, is too late, unleſs he had produced the Teſtimony of ſome, who lived about that time, to aſſert it: But this he has not done. Neither he nor his Followers give any Ac-

† *Bland*, Præfat. p. 11.

count

count where, or when, or by whom the Change was made. Common Reaſon ſhews, that ſuch a Change all over the World could not be made, and not be taken notice of, and not oppoſed by intereſted Perſons, whoſe Rights were invaded and violated by ſuch a Change. If Presbyters were by the Apoſtles themſelves inveſted with an equal Power of governing the Church, of Ordaining, *&c.* 'tis ſtrange that all of them, in all parts of the World, ſhould tamely part therewith, that no Church, nor Presbyter ſhould aſſert their Rights, but all quietly ſubmit to the Change without any Reluctance. Of this ſee more *Chap.* xiii. of the Hiſtory.

But beſides all this, *Polycarp*, that bleſſed Martyr, was made Biſhop of *Smyrna* by the Apoſtles themſelves, as we are told by *Irenæus*, (l. 3. c. 3.) who knew that holy *Polycarp*. And this ſufficiently contradicts the Aſſertion of Biſhops not being ſettled 'till forty Years after the Apoſtles time. The like appears in St. *Ignatius*, a Diſciple of St. *John*, being made Biſhop of *Antioch*; which as it is manifeſt from his excellent Epiſtles that teſtify his Concern for that Church, written when he was going to be martyred, ſo do they ſatisfactorily ſhew the Eminence of Biſhops above Presbyters; and this ſo plainly, that the Presbyterians find no other way to evade it, but by denying the Genuineneſs of thoſe Epiſtles. But with what weak Arguments, how great ſoever the Attempts have been, is ſhewn in the ſtrenuous Vindication of thoſe Epiſtles by the very learned Biſhop *Pearſon*, at which ſome have carped, but to which none have returned an Anſwer. As likewiſe how plainly the diſtinct Orders of Biſhops, Presbyters and Deacons, and the Superiority of Biſhops over Presbyters, appears in thoſe Epiſtles of St. *Ignatius*: And again, how the Management of Church Affairs reſides in the Biſhop; and how neceſſary it is for all Officers and Members of the Church to be in Subjection to the Biſhop, and in Communion with him. How nothing could be done

done validly without him, or by those appointed by him; and all this by divine Authority: See this made out *Chap.* vii. I might here add concerning this blessed Martyr, who was so ready to die, and to be made a Spectacle to Mankind for Christ's sake, that he cannot be thought so unjust, as formerly to assume such an Authority to himself, and when in Prospect of Death, to assert it to belong to Bishops; and so zealously to require a Submission to be paid to 'em by Presbyters as well as by the Deacons and the Laity, had he not known that this by divine Right was their due, and Institution of God himself, which they received from the Hands of the Apostles. And certainly 'tis the Concern of all Christians, to beware lest they become θεομάχοι, fighters against God, and Opposers of his Institutions.

Having considered this Objection, I proceed now to represent the grand Maxims of *D. Blondel*, which are the main Foundations of his elaborate Apology; if these are weak, the Superstructure must fall. This I the rather undertake, because this Book of his is the great Magazine, out of which the Champions for Presbyterian Parity borrow their Armour, and in which they so much triumph; I shall do it that I may evince how weak and unconclusive his Reasonings are, and hereby shew on how sandy a Foundation the Superstructure of Presbytery is erected, and of how little Service all his Pains are to weaken the established Government of the Church of *England* by Bishops.

1. Of how little Force is that Argument which *Blondel* uses, and which goes through a great part of his Book, that because ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος which we translate *Bishop* and *Elder*, are used promiscuously in the new Testament, and do often signify the same Office; to conclude that therefore the Office of Bishop and Presbyter are the same, and that the Presbyter is invested with all Church-Power; and that when many of the Fathers of the fourth and following Centuries (who lived in an Age when *Blon-*

del

all owns Bishops were every where settled, and had been so before that a long time, a Government to which these Fathers submitted, or themselves exercised,) do interpret and that rightly, that by the Word *Bishops* Presbyters were meant; as *Phil.* 1. 1. and other Places, that therefore they thought that Bishops and Presbyters were the same, and not distinct Offices. When (1.) at the time when the *Acts of the Apostles*, and St. *Paul*'s Epistles were written, there were no Bishops settled in particular Churches, in that the Apostles themselves, during that time, administred the Government of the Church in their own Persons; and after, when Churches were multiplyed, by some eminent Persons, such as *Timothy* and *Titus*, whom the Apostles invested with Apostolick Authority over many Churches, with Power to Ordain, &c. Is it any wonder if afterwards, when the Apostles ordained and appointed Persons to be their Successors in the Government of particular Churches, that the Words which had been used more largely, so as indifferently to signify any Ministers of Christ, should then be confin'd to a narrower Sense? So as *Episcopus* or Bishop should be appropriated to the highest Rank of Christ's Ministers, who succeeded his Apostles in governing the Church, and the Word *Presbyter* to the next Rank of Ministers? We find that St. *Peter* (1 *Pet.* v. 1.) and St. *John* (2 *Joh.* 1.) notwithstanding they were Apostles, and so of the supremest Order in the Church, stiled themselves Presbyters *; and as I may presume that our Dissenters will not, from the use of the Name, degrade the Apostles, and equal them with ordinary Presbyters, so neither should they advance Presbyters to an Equality with Bishops, because the Name of Bishops was given them. It would be easy to give se-

* May not Presbytery 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. denote the College of the Apostles, or some Number of them, with whom St. *Paul* joined in imposing Hands on *Timothy*?

veral Instances, but that it would be tedious to the Reader, how Words at several times have been used in different Senses, and particularly in Words denoting Offices, how they were applied to signifie sometimes one Office, afterwards another. As the Word *Imperator*, which first signified the General of an Army, afterwards was appropriated to the *Roman* Emperors, otherwise styled *Augusti* and *Cæsares*: And how the Word *Cæsar*, which was at first given to him who had the supreme Authority, was afterwards appropriated to him who had a Share in the Government, but yet subordinate to the supreme Emperor. But I shall consider chiefly the Word *Presbyter*, or Elder, and shew how it was used among the Jews, from whence came the like different Acception thereof in the Christian Church.

Whoever was Head of a Family, he was the *Elder* thereof, and his Children and Servants were subject to him; and yet he was subject to his Father, who was his Elder; and yet even this Man was subject to his Father, who, if the ancientest Survivor, was elder to, and had the supreme Authority over all the rest; even over those who were supreme in their own Family; he was the *Rosh Avoth*. Thus *Kohath* and and *Merari* were Elders in their own Family, yet subject to *Levi*, and he to *Jacob*, who, whilst alive, was their supreme Elder. So that tho' the Name *Elder* was given to each of them, yet hence none can say that they were of Equal Authority. *Aaron* was called Priest; *Cohan*, as well as his Sons, the Priests of an inferior Order; and (as 'tis observed by learned Men, he is never called by any other Name; and yet none will conclude from this promiscuous use of the Word, that the other Priests were *Aaron*'s Equals. As none could infer that such, on whom the *Roman* Emperors conferred the Title of *Cæsar*, were their equals; because at first that Title had been given to the supreme Emperor. I might here take notice how the Word Ἐπίσκοπος, *Bishop*, has had various

ous Significations, and was uſed to denote ſeveral Offices among the *Athenians* and *Romans*, and ſo uſed in the Seventy's Tranſlation of the Old Teſtament. But omitting that, I ſhall only conſider it as uſed in the New Teſtament. In general, it ſignifies an *Overſeer*, and ſo is tranſlated *Acts* xx. 28. Particularly, 'tis applied to the Office of an *Apoſtle*, *Acts* i. 20. from which *Judas* by his Tranſgreſſion fell, unleſs we refer it (as† a learned Perſon doth) to his bearing the Bag, and being Almoner among the Apoſtles. But withal, we find it attributed to *Chriſt* himſelf, who (1 *Pet.* ii. 25.) is called *the Biſhop of our Souls*. Hence 'tis no wonder that theſe, who under Chriſt have the Care of Souls committed to them, his Miniſters of the ſecond, as well as of the ſuperior Order, are thus ſtiled by St. *Paul*. Tho' afterwards it became appropriated to the higheſt Order, *i. e.* to thoſe who ſucceeded the Apoſtles in governing the Church, The like might be urged of the Word Διάκονος in the New Teſtament, and Biſhops called ſome *Condiaconos**.

From all this we may ſee how unreaſonable and fallacious it is to argue from the ambiguous Uſe of Names and Titles, and to conclude that Biſhop and Presbyter are the ſame Office, becauſe the Names are uſed to denote the ſame Office in holy Scriptures, eſpecially during the time whilſt the Government of the Church, which is the proper Office of Biſhops, was in the Hands of the Apoſtles. But after that time, the Name of *Apoſtle* (which was eſteemed too great for their Succeſſors in the Government of the Churches being laid aſide) the Name of *Biſhop* was conſtantly appropriated to them, as that of *Preſbyter* to the inferior Order, which the Ancient Fathers never apply to Biſhops of their own time; and if to thoſe of former times, 'tis not with reſpect to their Office but their Age, as it ſignifies an *old* Man; at leaſt to their An-

† V. Cl. *Dodwelli Paræn.* §. 30.

* St. *Chryſoſtom* on *Phil.* i. 1. obſerves that *Presbyters* at firſt were called Ἐπίσκοποι and Διάκονοι.

tiquity in the Church ‖; as is evident from what *Blondel* cites out of *Papias*, presently to be mentioned.

2. Another Argument of *Blondel's* which he much insists on, is, that Bishop and Presbyter are by the Fathers *both* comprized under the Name of *Sacerdotes*, both called *Priests*, in Opposition to, and Distinction from Deacons; that therefore they are the same Office, and that these Fathers made no Difference betwixt Bishop and Presbyter, but supposed them both to be invested with the same Power. That because they divide the Clergy sometimes into two, the *Sacerdotes* and *Ministri*, Ἱερεῖς and Διάκονοι, comprizing both Bishops and Presbyters under the first Appellation, that thence they judged them to be the same Office. For which he cites *Origen*.

In answer to which I might have observed, that *Hilary*, who goes under the Name of St. *Ambrose*, St. *Jerom*, and others whom he cites for this, lived in the fourth Century well advanced, at a time when all own that Bishops, and those superior to Presbyters, were every where established in the Church, and which *Blondel* himself acknowledges to have been done about two hundred Years before that time. As also that they, who are cited for comprizing both Orders under the Name of Priests, have given their Suffrage for Episcopacy. See *Chap.* xiv.

But omitting that, I shall (1.) observe, that the ancient Fathers speak of the Officers of the Christian Church, as nearly resembling those of the Jewish Church. To these St. *Clement* himself in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *c.* 40. and even St. *Jerom* resemble the Church-Officers under the Gospel; there were the *High Priest*, the *Inferior Priests*, and the *Levites*. "What *Aaron* and his Sons, and the *Levites* were in "the Temple (saith St. *Jerom. Ep. ad Evag.*) the "same are Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in the "(Christian) Church." Now none can truly argue,

‖ See this fully proved by Bishop *Pearson*, in his *Vindic. Ignat. part.* 2. *cap.* 13.

that

that because the two first Orders in the Jewish Church are called Priests, and by that were distinguished from Levites, that therefore they were both of the same Order *; that because *Aaron* is always in the Old Testament call'd Priest, *Lechoben*, therefore he was not of a superior Office to his Sons, in that they were likewise called Priests. When the High Priest had a Jurisdiction over the Priests of the second Order, and God had appointed some peculiar Functions, particularly on the great Day of Atonement, for him only to execute. There were indeed some Offices, which either the High Priests or the Inferior Priests might discharge, yet such that the Levites had no Authority to execute, tho' these were God's Ministers, Assistants to the Priests, and could perform some sacred Rites, which Persons of other Tribes could not officiate. The Gospel Dispensation nearly resembles this. There's an Evangelical Priesthood, of which the Mosaical was a Type. We have an Altar, and thereon διὰ παντὸς θυσίαν, we make an Oblation of a Sacrifice of Praise, *Heb.* xiii. 10. 15. *viz.* the Holy Eucharist. This Sacrifice none have Authority to offer up to God, but they who are set apart to this holy Office. Both *Bishops* and *Presbyters* have Authority to make this Oblation, (which Deacons, tho' Gospel-Ministers, have not) and hence Presbyters are stiled by the ancient Fathers *Sacerdotes*, as well as Bishops. Notwithstanding the Presbyters enjoy the Privilege equally with the Bishop, both being Priests; yet they, even in this, exercise their Power in Dependence on, and Subordination to the Bishop, by whose Authority, and under whose Directions, under God, they are to be governed. (Whereas the Bishops Power is independent, as is observed by the learned Mr. *Bingham*,

* *Philo* comprehends all sacred Offices under two Orders (ἱερεῖς) *viz.* Priests and Levites, and yet makes the High Priest of the highest Order, and the Inferior of a second Order, (δεύτερος ἱερεύς.) See this handled by Mr. *Dodwell Dissert. Cyp.* x. §. 8.

Antiq.

Antiq. l. 1. p. 76.) but have no Authority to ordain, confirm, and the like Offices which are appropriated to the Biſhop, who in the Language of former Ages is *Summus & Primus Sacerdos*. And we ſhall find thoſe Fathers, who compriſe both Orders under the general Name of Prieſts, confining the Power of Impoſition of Hands to the Biſhop; particularly St. *Chryſoſtom* and St. *Hierom*: See more of this, *Chap.* xiv. As alſo you have there the reaſon why ſome of the Fathers of that time ſpeak ſo magnificently of the Office of Presbyters, *viz.* To humble the Deacons, who, by reaſon of their Wealth, contemned the Presbyters. The Abſurdity of which theſe Fathers demonſtrate, when the Office of a Presbyter was ſacerdotal, and in that reſpect equal with that of a Biſhop, which the Deacons could not pretend to, their Office being only miniſterial. This is plainly the Deſign of the Author of the *Queſtions* on the Old and New Teſtament (the ſame with the Counterfeit St. *Ambroſe*) in Oppoſition to *Falcidius*, that equalized the Deacons with the Presbyters, whoſe Words on 1 *Tim.* 3. illuſtrate this thing, who ſpeaking of Biſhops and Presbyters, ſays, *uterque Sacerdos eſt, ſed* Epiſcopus *primus eſt*; *ut omnis Epiſcopus* Presbyter *ſit*, *non omnis Preſbyter* Epiſcopus. This is obſerved by learned Men †, "That the Ancients "frequently divide the Officers of the Church into "*Sacerdotes* and *Miniſtros*, and as commonly ſub-"divide the *Sacerdotes*, the Prieſts, into the higher "and lower Stations; as St. *Jerom*, in his Book "*adv. Lucifer. Eccleſia ſalus in Summi Sacerdotis dig-*"*nitate pendet*, *aliter tot Schiſmata eſſent quot Sacer-*"*dotes.* Where by *Summus Sacerdos* he means the Bi-"ſhop, by *Sacerdotes* the Presbyters, whom he in "another Work calls *Sacerdotes ſecundi in honore Ec-*"*cleſiaſtico gradûs*," Yea, even St. *Cyprian*, (whoſe

† Biſhop *Parker*'s Government of the Church for the firſt 600 Years, *p.* 43.

Teſtimo-

Teſtimony for the Diſtinction and Superiority of Biſhops and Presbyters, the Reader may find *Chap.* ix.) ſometimes comprising Church-Officers under the two Names of *Sacerdotes* and *Miniſtri*, as *Blondel* p. 43. obſerves, and from it would infer that there was only two kinds of Officers in the Church at that time, and thence that Biſhops and Presbyters were the ſame Office; when in one of his Citations out of the 67th Epiſtle (*Oxon.*) of St. *Cyprian*, where he diſtinguiſhes the Miniſterial from the Sacerdotal Office, ſubdivides the Sacerdotal Office into that of Biſhops and Presbyters, whom he diſtinguiſhes from Deacons. Omitting here his frequent mention of Biſhops, Presbyters and Deacons, as diſtinct Officers in the Church, and other things obſerved in the Hiſtory, which ſhew what Authority Biſhops had in the Church in that bleſſed Martyrs Days, even over Presbyters; and withal ſhew what little Modeſty ſuch Men have, who make St. *Cyprian* a Patron of Presbyterian Parity. Theſe Men I refer to the learned Author of the *Principles of the Cyprianick Age*, and its *Vindication*. Only I deſire the Adverſaries of Epiſcopacy, that would make St. *Cyprian* of their Party, to tell me, whence it is, if Presbyters were his Equals, that he never ſtyles them his *Collegues*, as he doth the Biſhops? If Presbyters had the Power of Government, why he reprimands them for reconciling the *Lapſi* by their own without his Authority? Why muſt *Caldonius* and *Herculanus*, two Neighbour-Biſhops, be called in to excommunicate the Schiſmaticks of *Carthage*, when St. *Cyprian* was retired, if the Presbyters had in themſelves that Power*? Why ſhould St. *Cyprian* himſelf, in his Retirement, ordain *Aurelius* and *Celerinus*, eſpecially when only entred into the lower Offices of a *Teacher*

* That *Gaius Diddenſis* ſhould be excommunicated, when he could not be preſent, by his Collegues, *i. e.* Biſhops, if Presbyters had Power to have done it.

and

and of a *Lector*, if his Presbyters might have ordained them; and then the Ordination, in respect to some Circumstances, might have been performed with greater Solemnity than could be done in that Solitude? If St. *Cyprian* thought that all Presbyters were Bishops, whence comes he to declare that there ought to be but *one Bishop* in a City, and that a *Secundus* was *Nullus*; yea even in the great City, the large Church of *Rome*, where were forty six Presbyters? Whence came it in those Days, that Persons could not be admitted to Communion in Churches where they were Strangers, unless it appear'd they were in Communion with the Bishop of the Church from whence they came, and this attested by the *Literæ formatæ* of that Bishop, the Letters of Presbyters being insignificant in that Case, if Bishops had not then been superior to Presbyters? To conclude this, (tho' more to the same purpose might easily be added) Whence was it, that tho' Presbyters and others were present in *Synods*, yet Decrees passed only in the Name of the Bishops, and was established by their Authority, if Presbyters were then esteemed of equal Authority with Bishops? See this fully handled, *Chap.* x.

3. Another Pretence used by *Blondel*, to level Bishops with Presbyters, even in the Age immediately after the Apostles, is because Bishops were then styled Presbyters. This he brings in Opposition to the Advocates of Episcopacy, who assert, that in that Age the Word *Episcopus* was appropriated to the highest Office, and that of *Presbyter* to the next Office in the Church; for which he produces some Instances †. But this wholly arises from the Ambiguity of the Word πρεσβύτης, as it signifies *an old Man*, and is the same with πρεσβύτατος, which will appear from the Instances which *Blondel* gives us; as par-

† The learned Reader may find this fully handled in Bishop *Pearson's Vindic. Ignat.* part 2. c. 13. p. 166. *&c.*

ticularly

ticularly from that of *Papias*, out of *Eusebius*, *H. E.* l. 3. c. 39. This Person, who had never seen any of the Apostles, was yet desirous to speak with such who had conversed with them, that he might from them learn what they heard the Apostles preach: And having found some of them, he tells his Reader what he had received ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων from those *old Men*; and then says, "If at any time I met with any who "had conversed with τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, the Presbyters, "or ancient Men, I enquired of them the Sayings "τῶν πρεσβυτέρων of the Ancients, what *Andrew*, what "*Peter* had spoken, what *Philip*, what *Thomas*, *James*, "*John*, *Matthew*, or any other of the Lord's Disci-"ples" had taught. By which *latter Presbyters* 'tis plain that he means *Christ's Apostles*, whom our Adversaries will allow to be superior to ordinary Presbyters. So that it's manifest that *Papias*, in the use of the Word *Presbyters*, had no respect to this or that Order in the Church of Christ, when he never reckons up the several Orders in the Church, never distinguishes their Functions, nor mentions Bishops or Deacons, nor speaks of any Particular Bishop, or Presbyter, with whom he had any Communication. And hence what *Blondel* cites out of him is of no Advantage to his Cause.

The like might be shewn in *Irenæus*'s Words, in his Epistle to *Florinus* (*Euseb. Hist. E.* l. 5. c 20.) οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν πρεσβύτεροι, *i. e.* "The Ancients who were be-"fore our time delivered not such Doctrines." And so his calling *Polycarp* Ἀποστολικὸν πρεσβύτερον, an Apostolical old Man, as being ninety Years of Age, one who had conversed with the Apostles, and by them was made Bishop of *Smyrna*. These Men are at a great Loss for Witnesses in their Cause, when they would force *Irenæus* to serve them in it, when he so plainly asserts the Office of Bishops, deduces it from the Apostles, and delivers the Succession of them in some Churches from the Times of the Apostles, as is shewn *Chap.* viii.

4. Another Argument whereby *Blondel* would prove that Biſhops and Preſbyters are the ſame Office, is, becauſe they are equally required to diſcharge the ſame Duties. It is incumbent on both of them to take heed to *the Flock of Chriſt*, to be *Overſeers* of them, *to feed the Church*, to be ἡγούμενοι *Rulers*; and becauſe the like honourable Titles, which denote Power as well as Dignity, are given to Preſbyters, as well as Biſhops in the Holy Scriptures, and likewiſe in the ancient Fathers of the Church, has πρεσβύτης, particularly by *Gregory Nazianzen*, who ſhews that they are intruſted to be over the Souls of Men, to be Guides, χειρὶ συνωρεῖν, to be joyned with Chriſt himſelf in the Adminiſtration of holy Offices, τῷ ἄνω κόσμῳ διακονεῖν, to adminiſter to the heavenly Kingdom, the World above; θεὸς ἐν τῷ θεοποιεῖσθαι, to be in a Senſe God's, as Magiſtrates are ſtyled in the Holy Scriptures, and to be inſtrumental to make Perſons participate of the Divine Nature, the θεία φύσις, partly by their Preaching, partly by conveying in Baptiſm the Holy Spirit to them. Which Expreſſions 'tis probable the Atheiſts of this Age will aſcribe to the Prieſtcraft of *Nazianzen*'s Age. But paſſing by thoſe Miſcreants, who can ſpare neither God nor Man, I'll only conſider thoſe Expreſſions with reſpect to the purpoſe for which *Blondel* produces them. What I have already obſerved concerning the Prieſthood being aſcribed to Preſbyters, as well as to Biſhops, by the Ancients, is ſufficient to anſwer *Blondel*'s Argument, in that all thoſe Encomiums and eminent Titles belong to them on this Reaſon, becauſe they are *Prieſts*; and hence that many things, as the Adminiſtration of the bleſſed Sacraments, do belong alike to both Offices, and the ſame Titles of Honour which ariſe from the ſame ſacred Employment of Prieſts, are equally conferred on them; ſome part of the ſame Reſpect ſhewn to 'em, as riſing up to 'em, the ſame Qualifications required in both, and the ſame Duties of Feeding, Overſeeing, *&c.* are requir-

ed

ed of both. Which as it ſhews the Dignity and the Momentouſneſs of the Office of Preſbyters, when in many things 'tis the ſame with that of Biſhops *, ſo it doth not degrade Biſhops from their eminent Station in the Church, or higher Degree of Prieſthood, or deprive them of the ſole Right of Ordaining, and the like Functions, which are appropriated to their Office, which Preſbyters have no Authority to exerciſe. The extolling the Office of Preſbyters, tho' to a ſingular height, is no Argument that the ſame Perſons equal it with that of a Biſhop, as is evident from what we may obſerve in St. *Ignatius*. He calls the Preſbytery † διωρισμένον ἀξιονόμαστον, πρεσβυτήριον, τοῦ θεοῦ ἄξιον, which may indeed only refer to the Preſbyters of that Church, but more generally he puts the Preſbyters ‖ εἰς τόπον συνεδρίου τῶν Ἀποστόλων, in the Place of the Council of ths Apoſtles. And * elſewhere ſpeaks of them εἰς συνέδριον θεοῦ καὶ εἰς σύνδεσμον Ἀποστόλων, as the Council of God, and joint Aſſembly of the Apoſtles. And they are by him ſtiled ἀξιοπλόκου πνευματικὸς στέφανος τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, the well-compliteated ſpiritual Crown of the Preſbytery. And withal, he Preſſes the *Magneſians* † to be ſubject to the College of Preſbyters ἐν νόμῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, as to the Law of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And the * *Epheſians*, to obey them ἀμερισπάστῳ διανοίᾳ, with a ſteady Mind. Yet for all this, none that have read this bleſſed Martyrs Epiſtles, will ſay, notwithſtanding the Honour he puts upon Preſbyters, and the Duties he requires to be paid to them, that they are repreſented by him as equal with Biſhops, and inveſted with the ſame Power with them; ſeeing he on the contrary charges them to be ſubject to the Biſhops, and not to preſume to act any thing without them, or Commiſſion from

* And gives an Account of the συνάφεια of Biſhops and Preſbyters, which *Blondel* cites St. *Baſil* for.

† *Ignat. Ep. ad Epheſ.* c. 4, 12. ‖ *Magneſ.* c. 6. * *Trall.* c. 3.
‖ *Magneſ.* c. 13. † *Ib.* c. 2. * *Eph.* c. 20.

them. These things being often inculcated in these Epistles; so that our Adversaries yield that the Author of them makes Bishops to be not only distinct from, but also superior to Presbyters; as will appear *Chap.* vii.

5. Another Argument used by *Blondel*, and often suggested by him, to make the Office of Presbyters and Bishops the same, is by telling us, that whatever supereminent Power Bishops enjoyed in the Church, was granted to 'em by Synodical Decrees; that this originally belonged equally to Presbyters, which the Synods deprived them of, and injuriously appropriated to Bishops. This he deduces from the Acts of some Councils, which condemn Presbyters meddling in some Ecclesiastical Affairs, and forbid their doing it for the future. From whence he concludes, that Presbyters had originally such rights; that the Bishops, by challenging such things to themselves, did encroach upon the Presbyters, and were guilty of Usurpation by claiming that as peculiar to their Office, which the Presbyters had equally a Right to with the Bishops, and that they were debarred from enjoying it by the Determination of Synods, and consequently only by humane Authority. The whole Reasoning of *Blondel* is grounded on this Supposition, that Presbyters were never to blame in invading the Prerogatives of Bishops; that they never transcended their just Bounds, or presumed to act any thing that belonged not to their Office; and consequently stood in no need of any Restraints from their Superiors, or Regulation by Synods; but that all the Fault was in the Bishops, who ambitiously arrogated to themselves, as their Prerogative many things which equally belonged to Presbyters.

This is *Blondel's* Reasoning, and it might have had some Validity in it, could he have given us any Instances of Presbyters *Ordaining* any to sacred Offices, of their *Confirming* Persons that had been baptized, and other Acts which we say are appropriated

ted to Bishops; or at least, if performed by Presbyters, were not esteemed as null and invalid. But this he has not done in all that Mass of Citations which he has given us. Nay, he hath not given us (so far as I remember) one Instance, in Churches where Presbyters were of Council to the Bishop, that any thing was referred to be determined by their Suffrage, much less that any thing was carried by their Votes against their Bishop.

One of *Blondel*'s chief Arguments to prove that the Power of Bishops over Presbyters was by synodical, and consequently human Institution, and thus acknowledged by the Church, is a Passage in the second Council of *Sevil*, which he touches on in his *Preface*, *p.* 33. and largely insists on, *p.* 75. of his *Book*, and repeats as largely, *p.* 175. That Council censured *Agapius*, Bishop of *Corduba*, for appointing Presbyters in the Absence of the Bishop, to erect Altars and consecrate Churches." This that Council censures, and forbids the doing it for the future, and adds this as the Reason, "Because the "Lord commanded that *Moses* alone should erect "an Altar in God's Tabernacle; it was he alone "that anointed it, as being God's High Priest; according as it is written, *Moses and Aaron among his "Priests*: Therefore that which was enjoyned the "Chief Priests, of whom *Moses* and *Aaron* were "Types, the Presbyters, who resemble the Sons of "*Aaron*, ought not to presume to take unto themselves. For altho' there be many Ministrations, "which are common to them with the Bishops, yet "let them know that there are some things *novellis "& Ecclesiasticis regulis sibi prohibita*, which are forbidden them by the new Laws, and those of the "Church, of which they give some Instances, such "as the Consecration or Ordination of *Presbyters*, &c. "erecting of Churches and Altars, and the Blessing and anointing them; the Imposition of Hands "upon, and giving the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,

to

" to such as were baptized.—— For all these things " are unlawful in Presbyters, because *Pontificatus apicem non habent, they have not the supreme Honour of* " *the High Priesthood*, which honour is due alone to " the Bishops by the Authority of the Canons, that " hereby the distinction of Orders, and the eminent " Dignity of the High Priest might be discerned." From this Decree of this Council, and the Reason therein assigned, *Blondel* concludes, 1. " That so " late as six hundred Years after Christ, Presbyters are called *Pontifices* ". In return to which, (1.) I believe that this learned Man was not able to shew out of his vast reading, any ancient Father that gives the Name of *Pontifex* to any Christian Priest, excepting *Tertullian* *, who does it in way of ridicule. But, (2.) Neither does it appear from the Words of the Council, that this Name was then given to Presbyters, (tho' that of *Sacerdos* was:) the meaning of the Synod being only that the highest Dignity in the Church belonged to the Bishop, in which Presbyters had no Share. *Apex* denoted the Crest in the Helmet of Warriours †. If in those Days Bishops wore any badge of Honour on their Heads, as formerly the *Lamina* on their Breasts, possibly this Expression might allude to it.

2. *Blondel* infers, " That whatever is declared to " be due alone to Bishops, is not so from its own " Nature, but by humane Institution, *viz.* By vir- " tue of the Canons; and that if their Authority " had not intervened, all those things which are " reserved to the Bishop, the Presbyters had had a " common Right to. And, (3.) That whatever " things these fathers declared to be unlawful to Pres- " byters, they were hence unlawful, because they " were forbidden by *Novel* and *Ecclesiastical* Consti- " tutions. From whence it follows, that before " that Prohibition, all those things that were there-

* *Tertull. de Pudicit.* c. 1. † V. *Lipsi. de Milit.* Rom.

" by

" by forbidden might lawfully be exerciſed by " them." Now when the great Streſs of his Argument depends upon the word *Novellis*, he might have obſerved, that the *Novella Regula* are oppoſed to the old Conſtitutions under *Moſes*, and ſignify thoſe Laws which were given under the Goſpel; and that the *Regula Eccleſiaſtica* were the Rules given to the Chriſtian Church by the Sanction of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, who were the Founders of this Church; which is evident by what is ſpoken of *Moſes* and *Aaron* immediately before, to which this is oppoſed. And conſequently the *new*, when conſidered with the *old* Legal Conſtitutions delivered by *Moſes*, are not therefore of meer human Authority, when given us by them who had their Commiſſion from Heaven. Neither doth this invalidate the Authority of theſe Rules, becauſe upon their being violated, Synods enforced the Obſervation of them by Canons. Nor does this ſhew that they are of no ancienter date than ſuch Canons, which a-new require the Obſervation of them, no more than when ſome things which are eſtabliſhed by *Magna Charta*, are reinforced by new Acts of Parliament. Does this diminiſh the Authority of that Charter, or render ſuch things Strangers to our ancient Conſtitution, becauſe again ratified by new Statutes? Eſpecially when we can ſhew by ſeveral Inſtances, that in former times they have been obſerved in this Kingdom, before theſe latter Statutes were enacted. In this Caſe, if *Blondel* would have proved that Preſbyters were deprived of thoſe Powers by the Decrees of Synods, he ſhould have ſhewn, that before ſuch Decrees they enjoyed theſe Powers; and this he ſhould have done, by giving Inſtances of Presbyters exerciſing thoſe Powers; particularly of ordaining Perſons to holy Offices. But this he has not done, nor could do, notwithſtanding his Acquaintance with the ancient Fathers and Hiſtorians of the Church. And this we deſire others to do, before they

they make use of the same Argument; otherwise all their arguing will be invalid and insignificant. And if they can produce any Instance of any Presbyters assuming such Authority, let them shew that it was not censured by the Church, and that it was not judged irregular, and of no Validity.

This I have more largely insisted on, because it has a greater shew of Reason than most which *Blondel* has given us; tho' little in Truth, when strictly examined. I have considered the Proof from that Council of *Seville*, on Supposition that what we have of it is of uncontested Authority; tho' the Variety of Readings, and the Interpolations which *Blondel* himself produces, might have given him some Grounds to suspect; besides the small, or no Account we have thereof in History. I must acquaint the Reader, that tho' what our Adversaries say of the *Chorepiscopi* be of little Service to their Cause, yet because some have insisted on it, I have consider'd it *Chap.* xiii.

There is one Suggestion against Episcopacy, which, tho' entertain'd on no Ground, yet being popular must not be omitted, and that is, That this Government is *Popery*; a Word undeservedly, tho' too frequently, used by the Enemies of our Church, as a Scare-crow to fright Men from its Communion, and to prejudice their Minds against its Constitutions, tho' never so innocent. That which truly deserves that Name, are those Doctrines and Practices which are contrary to the Doctrine of Christ and his blessed Apostles, and yet have been introduced into, are retained in, and maintained by, the Church of *Rome*: Consequently, whatever is agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, consonant to the Practice of the blessed Apostles, and is evidenced to be such by its universal Reception in the first and purest Ages of the Church, (which has been in part, and will farther be proved that Episcopacy has been) is falsly and maliciously branded as *Popish*. Nay farther, the Depression of Bishops, and their being deprived of their

their Rights by the Encroachments and Usurpations of the Pope upon them, was a thing justly complained of, as needing Reformation. And one thing propounded as a ground of our Reformation, was the retrieving the original Rights of Bishops, which the Pope had injuriously invaded, whilst he challenged the whole Power of governing the Catholick Church, and making the Bishops only as his Curates. The Pope used many Methods to diminish the Bishops Power, such as exempting the Monasteries from their Jurisdiction, and making them wholly dependent on himself, that the Monks might be Tools to secure his usurpt Authority over Bishops; in which Service the new Order of *Jesuits* have been of late chiefly instrumental. Another Method to lessen the Authority of Bishops, was the setting the Schoolmen on Work to level them, as near as possible, with the Presbyters, by their subtle and nice Distinctions.

And to name no more, the great Diligence that was used in the Council of *Trent*, to hinder the passing of the Decree for the Divine Right of Episcopacy; by whom was this done, but by the great Champions of the Pope's superlative Power? In that these Men were sensible, that the asserting the true original Power of Bishops would evince the Unreasonableness of the Pope's Encroachments on their just rights, and shew how justly they acted, who endeavoured to retrench his Exorbitances.

And now I leave it to the Consideration and Determination of the Impartial Reader, who come nearest to Popery, they who assert the Cause of Episcopacy and the Authority of Bishops against the Pope and his Adherents who endeavour to depress it, or they who with the Pope make it their Business to rob the Bishops of their just Rights, to deny their Divine Right, and (as much as lies in their Power) to equal them with Presbyters? And who promote the Interest of the Church of *Rome* most, they who defend the establish'd Government of our Church by Bishops, or

they who joyn with the Papists in their Endeavours to overthrow it? At which, when they once thought it effected, they so much rejoiced; this being the great Bulwark of the Protestant Reformation.

But I'll conclude this with referring the Reader to others who have wrote on this Subject, and particularly to Bishop *Parker's Case of the Church of* England, *p.* 252, *&c.* where he shews that the taking away the Divine and Perpetual Right of Episcopacy opens a Door to Popery.

Before I conclude, I must offer one thing to the Consideration of Dissenters, and that is a Challenge which Dr. *Bryan* a Non-conformist in his *Dwelling with God*, p. 205. (cited by Mr. *Bennet* in his Book of Schism) tells the Reproachers of Bishops, has been made but never was answered; it is this, *We require you to find but one Church upon the Face of the Earth, that hath not been ordered by Episcopal Government.* If this cannot be answered, and consequently it must follow, that this Government was universally received in all Places where Christian Religion was entertained, and also continued in all times, it must necessarily have its Original from the Apostles themselves. And if Instituted by the Apostles, whom the Holy Spirit led into all Truth, then of Divine Institution. That is, to be esteemed as Catholick, and to be believed as such, (according to the Rule of *Vincentius Lirinensis* *,) "Which is received every where, "and at all times, and of all." *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.* This Challenge we still renew. And 'tis the Design of my History to evidence, that in the three first Ages after Christ, and in the beginning of the fourth, the Church was every where governed by Bishops. And as for its universal Reception in the following Ages, there's no need of prov-

* Whose *Commonitorium* is translated, and illustrated with learned Annotations by Mr. *W. Reeves*, at the end of the Christian Apologies, thus translated, and illustrated by the same learned Person.

ing

ing it, when it is owned by the learnedest Presbyterians themselves. I know an Exception is made of the Church of *Scotland*, which is pretended to be governed at first by *Monks* and *Presbyters*. But what little ground there is for that, is fully shewn by the learned Bishop of *Worcester*, then of St. *Asaph*, in his Book written on that Subject; and is considered by me *Chap.* xii. of the History.

To evince the Universal Reception of Episcopal Government in all Churches, and in all Ages of the Church, till the Change was made at *Geneva*, and that the First Reformers from Popery thought themselves obliged to retain this Government among them, tho' in times of Persecution, and under such Difficulties, which might seem to excuse their Omission, or at least Suspension of it; I shall present the Reader with a Remarkable Passage, which I hope will not be unacceptable to him. And this not out of the Historian himself, having him not at hand, but from the Letter of the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hickes* to the Author of *Lay Baptism* invalid, whose Authority the Reader can have no Pretence to question. 'It is the Opinion and Proceedings of the *Presbyters* of those *Bohemians* and *Moravians*, who in Persecution retiring to a Mountainous Country near *Silesia*, grew very Sollicitous how the People should have the Ministry continued to them after they were dead. In this deliberation they had some thoughts, which necessity suggested to them, of ordaining other Presbyters to succeed them. But fearing that such Ordinations would not be Legitimate nor defensible, if called in question, at length in the Year 1467, the most Eminent among them that were dispersed through *Bohemia* and *Moravia*, met together to the number of about 70, who addressing themselves to God with Prayers and Tears, beseeched him to shew them if their purpose were agreeable to his Holy Will, and if that were the Time for it, and then

proceeded in the following manner to know the Will of God by *Lot*. They chose by Suffrage *Nine Men* from among themselves whom they thought most worthy to be *Bishops*, and having put into the Hands of a Child *Twelve* little Papers folded up, they directed him to distribute them among the *Nine* Persons. Nine of the Papers were *Blank*, and on the other Three were written EST *it is*, To wit, *The Will of God*, which they had begg'd him to discover to them. It might have so happened, that every one of the *Nine* Persons might have got a *Blank Paper*, which would have been a Sign to them of the *Negative Will* of God. But it came to pass, that the *three written Papers* fell into the Hands of Three among them, who were noted for their Piety, Learning, and Prudence.

These they embraced with joy as given unto them from Heaven, and then deliberated about their Consecration. And to that end sent Three of their Ministers to a part of the *Waldenses*, who being banished out of *France*, came to reside in the Confines of *Austria* and *Moravia*. To these they related their said State, and having asked their Counsel, *Stephanus*, one of their Bishops, calling to him another Bishop, and some Ministers, he made known to them the Purity of their Doctrine, the grievous Persecutions they had suffered in *France* and *Italy*, and the *lawful uninterrupted Succession* of their Bishops from the First Plantation of Christianity among them to that Time. To them therefore the *Bohemian* Ministers, Elected by Lot, were sent to be Consecrated Bishops: after which they resolved to Unite with the *Waldenses*, who were suddenly scattered by a new Persecution, in which *Stephanus* their Bishop suffered Martyrdom, being inhumanely Burnt at *Vienna*.

I cannot but recommend that Letter, (out of which I have given this Account) to the perusal of the Piously inquisitive Reader, in that he will find in the

Begin-

Beginning thereof, this obſerved: 'That as there 'was never any Church Founded but in and with 'Epiſcopacy; ſo no Sect ever aſſumed the Title of a 'Church, till they had a pretended rightful Biſhop, 'before the time of the Reformation.

Having thus conſidered the great Arguments which have been brought for Presbyterian Parity, and that in order to undeceive them, who from ſuch like Reaſonings have ſeparated from the Communion of the Church of *England*, I ſhall cloſe this Preface with a ſerious and affectionate *Perſuaſive* to ſuch Perſons, to conſider what I ſhall here farther offer to their Conſideration.

'Tis a confeſſed Truth, that none can be true Chriſtians, and in a State of Salvation, who wilfully live in the Commiſſion of any known Sin, or perſiſt in the Neglect of any known Duty. Now 'tis abſolutely required of us, and as plainly as any other Chriſtian Duty, that we ſhould *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, *Eph.* iv. 3. And 'tis preſſed there with prevalent Arguments and endearing Motives. And is it not then our great Concern, when our Intereſt in Chriſt, and our eternal Happineſs depends upon it, not to violate that Command, by breaking this Unity by a needleſs Separation? Beſides, Schiſms and Diviſions are not only Sins, things forbidden in the Holy Scriptures, 1 *Cor.* i. 10. but ſuch as have peculiar Marks of Infamy ſet upon them. We are commanded *Rom.* xvi. 17. to *mark them that cauſe Diviſions*, and in the ſame Place are told that theſe are *contrary to the Doctrine* that Chriſtians *have learned*, and hence we ſhould *avoid them*. They are branded as *Works of the Fleſh*, Gal. v. 20. and 1 *Cor.* iii. 3. They are of ſo miſchievous a Nature, that St. *Ignatius* thought that Schiſmaticks deprived themſelves of the Benefits procured by Chriſt. *Let no Man deceive himſelf: If a Man be not within the Altar, he's deprived of the Bread of God. If the Prayer of two or three be of ſuch Force, how much more ſhall that of the Biſhop*

and

and the whole Church be? He therefore that does not come together into the ſame Place with it, is proud, and has already condemned himſelf. Let us take care therefore that we do not ſet our ſelves againſt the Biſhop, that we may be the Servants of God. Ep. ad Eph. c. 4, 5. See alſo *ad Rom. c.* 3, 4. And *ad Magneſ. c.* 3, 4, 5, 6. *ad Smyrn. c.* 7. See more of this Chap. vii.

St. *Cyprian* * repreſents Schiſm as of ſo horrid a Nature, that Martyrdom could not atone the Guilt thereof: Of whoſe Thoughts ſee more *Chap.* x. † I might refer the Reader to what ſome Diſſenters themſelves have ſaid, particularly Dr. *Bryan*, in his *Dwelling with God*, *p.* 304. *&c.* and Mr. *Baxter*, as elſewhere, ſo in his *Chriſtian Directory*, *p.* 739. *&c.* Where he repreſents "Diviſions as Deformities of the Church, the Lamentation of Friends, and the Scorn of Enemies; the Diſhonour of *Chriſt* and the Goſpel; the great Hinderance of the Converſion and Salvation of the World, and of the Edification of the Church; that they fill the Church with Sins of a moſt odious Nature; they cheriſh Pride and Malice, and belying others, (the three great Sins of the Devil) as naturally as dead Fleſh breedeth Worms." After, "They are uneaſy to the Perſons themſelves, and rob them of the ſweeteſt part of Religion; they lead directly to apoſtacy from the Faith, and ſhake States and Kingdoms, having a lamentable Influence on the Civil Peace." And then, *p.* 741. "Schiſm is a Sin againſt ſo many, and clear, and vehement Words of the Holy Ghoſt, that it is utterly without Excuſe: Whoredoms, and Treaſon, and Perjury, are not oftener forbidden in the Goſpel than this. It is contrary to the very Deſign of Chriſt in our Redemption, which was to reconcile us all to God, and to unite and centre us all in him. It is a Sin againſt the neareſt Bonds of our higheſt Relations

* *De Unit. Eccleſ.*

† So alſo *Dionyſius* of *Alex. Euſeb. H. Eccl. l.* 6. *c.* 45.

" to

" to each other.—Laſtly, it is moſt unlike the hea-
" venly State, and in ſome regard worſe than the
" Kingdom of the Devil, for he would not deſtroy
" it by dividing it againſt itſelf." Read there much more to the ſame purpoſe.

But, beſides I deſire the Chriſtian Reader to conſider how much thoſe who ſeparate from Communion with their Biſhops, are Enemies to their own Souls, when they neglect the Means of their Salvation? There's no other way of obtaining Salvation, but thro' *Chriſt* our Saviour: no way of obtaining the Benefits of his Purchaſe, ſuch as Pardon, Sanctification, *&c.* but in the uſe of thoſe *Ordinances* which he has inſtituted to that End. Thoſe *Ordinances* are *Baptiſm*, by which we put on Chriſt, are ingrafted into him the true Vine, made Members of his myſtical Body. And alſo the *Lord's Supper*, wherein we feed on the Sacrifice of Chriſt's Body and Blood, and partake of the Benefits of his Paſſion. Theſe cannot be duly adminiſter'd, but by ſuch who are *Chriſts Miniſters*, Perſons commiſſioned by him; for 'tis in vain to expect that Chriſt ſhould ratify that in Heaven, which is done here on Earth without his Authority. None are ſuch Miniſters, but thoſe who are rightly and *duly ordained* to that ſacred Office. None are ſuch, but they who derive their Authority in a *Succeſſion* from the Apoſtles. This has all along been tranſmitted by the Impoſition of the Hands of *Biſhops*; the firſt of whom were appointed by the bleſſed Apoſtles, and others have all along received Authority from them in a continued Succeſſion. The Presbyters ordained by theſe Biſhops receive Authority to adminiſter the Holy Sacraments, and the like ſolemn Miniſtrations, but have no Power conferred on them to ordain others to the ſacred Office. Conſequently, as we have ground to expect the Benefits conferred on the Sacraments, when adminiſtred by Biſhops, and thoſe Presbyters that are ordained by Biſhops, ſo we have no ground to expect the ſame from

from others who are not thus ordained, in that they have no Power from Chriſt to Adminiſter thoſe Ordinances. Now when it is evident, that thoſe who are ordained by Biſhops are rightful Miniſters of Chriſt, as deriving their Authority in a continued Succeſſion from the Apoſtles; and conſequently, that their Miniſtrations are valid, and ſuch as we have Reaſon to believe that Chriſt will ratify in Heaven; are not thoſe Enemies to their own Souls, who forſake their Communion, and join in Aſſemblies oppoſite to 'em; nay, with a Party that are profeſſed Enemies to Epiſcopacy itſelf? I earneſtly deſire them to conſider whether they have any ground to expect thoſe great Bleſſings of Pardon, Reconciliation with God, Adoption, the Holy Spirit to renew and ſanctifie them; and the Gift of Eternal Life which all ſerious Chriſtians chiefly deſire to obtain, when they forſake the Communion of ſuch, from whoſe Miniſtry alone they have true ground to hope for the Conveyance of theſe Benefits to themſelves.

This is a thing of the higheſt Moment and Importance, as that upon which Mens Eternal Happineſs depends, and conſequently ought not to be ſlighted, but deſerves to be conſidered with their intenſeſt Thoughts and matureſt Deliberation; which as it excites my Zeal and Pity, ſo I heartily wiſh it may move Diſſenters to conſider with the greateſt Seriouſneſs and Application, to their preſent Comfort and future Happineſs: And eſpecially their Leaders and Teachers, who incur a greater Guilt, whilſt they draw others into the Sin of Schiſm, or at leaſt cauſe them to perſiſt therein ſecurely by their Doctrine and Example. This is properly ſcandalizing others. I earneſtly beg of them ſeriouſly to ponder what our Saviour has denounced againſt ſuch, *Luk.* xvii. 1, 2. And withal, how great a Sin it is to intrude into the ſacred Office without a Divine Commiſſion, when God ſo ſeverely puniſhed this in *Uzza* and *Uzziah*: This I am the more encouraged to propound, in that ſome

ſome worthy conſcientious Men among them have, upon ſight of their Error, returned to the Communion of our Church. This makes me not deſpair of the Converſion of others, and their following ſuch good Examples, if they could be prevailed with maturely to conſider of how great Importance this Affair is, as that in which their own and others Comfort and Happineſs is ſo nearly concerned. Beſides, the Honour of God, the Intereſt of Religion, the Peace of the Church, and its Security from its Enemies, which is preſerved by the Union of its Members. If hence they would be induced impartially to conſider the Conſtitution of our eſtabliſh'd Church, and on what firm Foundations it is ſettled; that its Government by Biſhops is that, by which the whole Church of God has been governed ever ſince the Apoſtles, and conſequently that Separation from ſuch a Church, unleſs it impoſes ſinful Terms of Communion, which cannot be truly alledg'd in this Caſe, is unjuſtifiable. That by the Impoſition of Biſhops Hands Chriſt's Miniſters have been always conſecrated to that ſacred Office, and conſequently that without this, their Call is null, and the Exerciſe thereof both invalid, and an Uſurpation. I ſay, a thorough Conſideration of theſe things might, by God's Bleſſings, awaken them from their ſecure Continuance in Schiſm, and prevail with them to endeavour to undeceive their Hearers, by their uniting themſelves to our Communion, and giving their Reaſons for ſo doing; by which they'll evidence the Truth of their Repentance for their former Errors, to the World, as well as to their own Conſciences.

I might have here conſidered ſome poor Refugees on which ſome well-meaning but unthinking Perſons truſt, to the deluding their own Souls; eſpecially the Examples of others. There are, ſay they, many good Chriſtians, Perſons of great Piety and Sobriety, ſuch who we believe deſire to pleaſe God and ſave their own Souls, that ſeparate from the Church of *England*, as well as we; nay, many of our Teachers, that keep

us in this way, are Men of great Piety and Zeal for God and Religion, and may not we ſafely follow the Example of the former; and the Example and Inſtructions of the Latter?

I would have ſuch conſider, that God hath made his own revealed Will, and not the Examples of any mere Men, the Rule of our Practice; that he has in the Holy Scriptures recorded the Failings of his Servants, yea of eminent Saints, that we might not make their Lives and Actions our Standards. We know that *Satan* himſelf appears as *an Angel of Light*; that many *Hereticks* have appeared in the Diſguiſe of ſingular Sanctity; that many *Papiſts* and Prieſts of the Church of *Rome*, and eſpecially their *Monks*, are Men of ſtrict Lives; that *Quakers* have been eminent for their exact Juſtice in their Dealings; that even ſome *Heathens*, ſuch as *Socrates*, *Epictetus*, and *Antoninus* have tranſcended Multitudes of Chriſtians in their virtuous Behaviour. And yet no conſiderate Chriſtians think it ſafe to make theſe Men their Guides, or to embrace their Religion, becauſe they tranſcend others in ſome Excellencies.

But this I ſhall not here proſecute, having ſpoken to it in my *Perſuaſive to Reformation and Union*, publiſhed thirty Years ſince; nor to their Pretences of greater Edification, their profiting moſt by the Sermons of Non-Conformiſts, and ſome other things there handled, but more fully by the Caſes of the *London Divines*, which are well abridged by the worthy Mr. *Bennet*. As alſo, that the Church of *England* impoſes no unlawful Conditions of Communion, (the only juſt Plea, if it could be made out, of Separation) which the ſame well deſerving learned Perſon has more largely handled in his Book of *Schiſm*; as alſo the Reverend Dr. *E. Wells*, in his Tracts.

I might have repreſented to them, who are confirmed in their Schiſm by the Examples of others, the Example of the old *Non-Conformiſts*, who tho' they diſliked ſome Ceremonies of our Church, yet declared it

a

a great Sin to ſeparate from our Pariſh-Churches, and condemned the *Browniſts* or *Barrowiſts* for their Separation; particularly Mr. *Hildersham* and Mr *John Ball*. But of this, and of the Riſe and Progreſs of Separation, the Reader may find a full hiſtorical Account in the learned Biſhop *Stillingfleet*'s *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*, Part I. And how zealouſly many other of the old *Non-Conformiſts* withſtood the Separatiſts; as in the other Parts he anſwers the *Pleas* for Separation. This latter has lately been very well done by Mr. *William Robertſon*, in his Anſwer to Mr. *Delaun*, entitled, *Diſſenters Self-condemned*.

There was one Argument that I propounded in my forementioned Tract, to diſſuade ſerious Chriſtians from Separation, and eſpecially when they were moved thereto, on Apprehenſion of purer Adminiſtrations, greater Means of Edification, affectionate Preaching, or the like, to be had in other Parties or Churches. This is the Danger theſe Men are liable to, of running from one Party to another, till they terminate in Atheiſm: unneceſſary Breaches leading to downright Irreligion. This appeared from Inſtances of ſome, during the licentious Liberty in the time of the late Rebellion, who at firſt became *Preſbyterians* on account of greater Reformation; and after, on the like Reaſoning, turned *Independents*; theſe pretending to greater Sanctity. Afterwards, when they ſaw the *Anabaptiſts*, refine on them, followed theſe; at length, on the like Motives, cloſed with the *Quakers*, and ſome with the *Ranters*. Others went over to the Church of *Rome*, and too many had their Religion to *ſeek*, or became downright *Scepticks* or *Atheiſts*. Give me leave here to expreſs the ſame Argument in the Words of Dr. *Scot* in his *Chriſtian Life*, Part I. ch. 4. §. 5. Where the Reader may find this ſubject excellently handled, and the ill Fruits of Schiſm repreſented. (1.) As it ſow'rs Mens Tempers, renders them peeviſh, and deſtroys Charity, the leading Virtue of our Religion. (2.) And as it leads to the fouleſt Hypocriſies

pocriſies, in that while they miſemploy their Zeal about little Trifles, ſtraining at Gnats, they ſwallow Camels, and glibly digeſt the greateſt Immoralities. So alſo, (3.) "Schiſms naturally lead to downright "*Irreligion*. For when once a Man departeth from "an eſtabliſhed Church without a juſt Warrant, there "is nothing that can confine or ſet Shores to him; "he hath no principles that can ſtay him any where, "or ſet any Meaſures of changing to him. For when "upon a mere *Humour* or *Fancy* he hath run from the "Church to ſuch a Sect, what ſhould hinder him "from running from that Sect to another, till he hath "run himſelf out of all Religion? He is *rolling* down "a *ſteep Hill*, and hath no Principles to ſtay him, ſo that "'tis impoſſible to determine *whither* he will *go*, or "*where* he will *ſtop*. He may perhaps ſtay at ſuch an "Opinion; but if he doth, it is by *chance*; and if he "doth not, he will be endleſly rolling from one Opi-"nion to another, and ſhifting his Church as oft as his "Almanack. For Schiſm is a large *Labyrinth*, that na-"turally divides and ſubdivides into infinite Paths "and Alleys, wherein a Man may wander to Eterni-"ty, and the farther he goes the more he may loſe "himſelf; and then when he hath wandred a while "out of one wild Opinion to another, and ſtill per-"ceives that the farther he goes the more he is diſſa-"tisfyed, 'tis a thouſand to one if he doth not at laſt "*ſuſpect* and *queſtion* all Religion, as if the whole were "an intricate Maze of abſurd and doubtful Opinions, "contrived on purpoſe to amuſe Mens Minds, and "entangle them in endleſs perplexities. For the Schiſ-"matick doth commonly place a great part of his "Religion in that Opinion upon which he divides "and ſeparates; ſo that if once he be diſſatisfyed "with this, as in all Probability he will quickly be, "having begun already to ring Changes, he will "be under a great Temptation to miſtruſt the *whole* "Religion to be as great an impoſture as he finds this "*darling Opinion* is; eſpecially after he hath run thro'

"ſeveral

" ſeveral Sets of Opinions, and finds them at laſt to
" be all *Delusions*.——Upon this Account therefore, I
" make no doubt but that the Atheiſm of this preſent
" Age is very much owing to its *Sects* and *Diviſions*.
The other part of that *Section* is worth the peruſal, wherein that excellent Author ſhews the Sinfulneſs and Danger of Schiſm; that nothing can excuſe ſeparating from our Eccleſiaſtical Superiors, but their impoſing *ſinful Conditions* of Communion; that we ought not to condemn them as ſuch, before we have uſed the utmoſt Diligence in examining what is to be ſaid *for*, as well as *againſt* them, and have propoſed our Doubts to our ſpiritual Paſtors; that if we are not *able* to judge, or do only *doubt* of their Lawfulneſs, 'tis ſafeſt, nay 'tis our Duty to ſubmit to the Churches Judgment and Authority; and that we ought not to ſeparate, till upon an impartial Enquiry into the Reaſons on both ſides, we are fully convinced that they are unlawful.

I ſhall conclude with repeating my affectionate earneſt Entreaties to all conſcientious Chriſtians, as they tender the Honour of God, the Intereſt of Religion, the Proſperity of the Church, the Peace and Welfare of theſe Nations, (which every good Man ought to be concerned for) and their own preſent Comfort and future Happineſs, which every one, eſpecially every good Chriſtian, cannot but be concerned for, ſeriouſly to conſider what I have here propounded. I would beg of them in the Name of the God of Love, and the Prince of Peace, that they would *follow after Peace*, eſpecially Peace with the Church of God, and hereby approve themſelves Chriſtians, by making Conſcience of this Chriſtian Duty which is ſo often inculcated in the Goſpel; that they would (as bidden 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 11. φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν) be *ambitious*, to be *peaceable* themſelves, and to promote this Chriſtian Temper in others; that they would σπουδάζοντες, (*Eph.* iv. 3.) uſe their greateſt Endeavours, their utmoſt Study and Induſtry to *preſerve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. But I'll ſhut up all in the pathetical

Words

Words of the Apostle, *Phil.* ii. 1. *If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels of Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy,* and the Joy of every pious Christian, *that ye be like-minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

POSTSCRIPT.

HAving in this previous Discourse, and in the History itself, had a chief Regard to what *D. Blondel* had written against Episcopacy, his Book being the great Armory from which other Adversaries have borrowed their Weapons, I think it not amiss here to subjoin a Letter written by Dr. *P. du Moulin*, and publish'd by Dr. *Durell* (to whom it was written) in the *Appendix* to his *View of the Government and publick Worship of God, in the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas*, p 339, 340. and since by Mr. *Bennet*; in that it discovers the free Judgment and inward Thoughts of that learned Person, and shews how little he was a Friend to them, who living in a Church and Nation in which Bishops are, and have all a long (but in time of Rebellion and Confusion) been settled, dare oppose that establish'd Government; and how he would much less have favour'd and countenanc'd those, who schismatically separate from such a Church, and rend it in Pieces by their unchristian Divisions, to the Breach of its Unity, Disturbance of its Peace, and the Hurt of their own Souls. If these men will have Regard to this Person, while pleading as an *Advocate*, (tho' unconclusively, as is here shewn) in a Cause which he had undertaken, ought they not to have a greater Regard to him, when he sedately declares his Mind as a *Judge*, and calmly and deliberately gives his Advice as a *Friend*. Especially when he (after all his former Perform-

formance) owns Epiſcopal Pre-eminence to be an ancient and *Apoſtolical* Conſtitution. I earneſtly beſeech the conſcientious Reader ſeriouſly to conſider this, together with that which I have already recommended to his Thoughts, as he values his own inward Peace, the Peace of Chriſt's Church, the Intereſt of Religion, and the Honour of Almighty God.

The LETTER is as follows.

" *My Reverend Brother,*

" To caſt my Mite into the rich Treaſury, which " you are now furniſhing, I muſt inform you of a " remarkable Paſſage very pertinent to your Pur- " poſe. In the Year 1651, that great and good " Man, my Lord Primate *Uſher*, told me, that the " learned Mr. *David Blondel* had concluded his *A-* " *pologia pro Hieronymo* with Words to this Purpoſe, " *By all that we have ſaid to aſſert the Rights of the* " *Preſbytery, we do not intend to invalidate the Ancient,* " *and Apoſtolick Conſtitution of Epiſcopal Preeminence.* " *But we believe that whereſoever it is eſtabliſhed con-* " *formably to the ancient Canons, it muſt be carefully* " *preſerved; and whereſoever by ſome Heat of Conten-* " *tion, or otherwiſe, it has been put down, or vio-* " *lated, it ought to be reverently reſtored.* The good " Primate told me beſides, that whereas the Book " had bin written at the earneſt Requeſt of the As- " ſembly of *Weſtminſter*, of the *Scots* eſpecially, who " had their Agents and Leagers in *Paris*, to ſtreng- " then their Party by miſinforming the Proteſtants " of *France*, and winning them to their Side. When " theſe Agents ſaw this Concluſion of Mr. *Blondel's* " Manuſcript, they expoſtulated with him very " loud, for marring all the Good he had done in his " Book, diſappointing the Expectation of the Aſſem- " bly, and ſhewing himſelf an Enemy, inſtead of a " Friend, to their holy Covenant. This they urged " upon him with ſuch Vehemency, and unwearied

" Impor-

" importunity, that they prevailed with him to p
" out that Conclusion. Having received this Infor
" mation, from a Person of so much Knowledg
" and Integrity, as that famous Prelate, yet for
" farther Confirmation I told it to Mr. *John Bl*
" *del* (*David*'s Brother) then living in *London*, wh
" denyed that there was any Truth in that Repor
" and defended his Brother, as much wronged b
" it. If you think (said I) that I wrong your Bro
" ther, complain to him of me in your next Le
" ter, and remember my kind Service to him
" Mr. *John Blondel* did not fail to write to
" Brother about this; and three or four Weeks a
" ter shew'd me a Letter from him, wherein he re
" membred his Love to me, and acknowledge
" that that Relation was true.

" This Advice I thought my self obliged to giv
" you, knowing that no Man can make a bett
" use of it than your self, to whose holy Labou
" about this Point the Church is so much indeb
" ted; and none more your Debtor in the Churc
" in that Regard, than,

" SIR,

" *Your most affectionate Brother and Servant,*

PETER DU MOUL

FINIS.